

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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R 241405Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3306
INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, IS, RO
SUBJ: ROMANIAN CHIEF RABBI SPEAKS ON JEWISH EMIGRATION

1. THE JERUSALEM POST ON MAY 22 CARRIED A STORY BY
STAFF WRITER SARAH HONIG ON A SPEECH MADE BY DR. MOSHE
ROSEN, THE CHIEF RABBI OF ROMANIA, SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DE-
PARTURE FROM ISRAEL.

2. ACCORDING TO HONIG, ROSEN, IN HIS REMARKS, DENIED
THE EXISTENCE OF A DELIBERATE POLICY ON THE PART OF THE
ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO CURTAIL THE EMIGRATION OF ROMANIAN
JEWS. ROSEN IS QUOTED AS SAYING "THERE IS NO TRUTH AT
ALL TO THESE REPORTS. JEWS CONTINUE TO EMIGRATE TO
ISRAEL AND SOME IN FACT CAME HERE ON THE SAME PLANE
WHICH BROUGHT ME TO LOD. THERE ARE ONLY A FEW REFUSALS
TO ALIYA PERMITS. THESE AMOUNT TO NO MORE THAN 50 CASES
...AND ARE CHIEFLY FOR SECURITY REASONS. THE ALIYA FROM
ROMANIA IS HARDLY OVER...SUCH REPORTS (OF A NEGATIVE
ROMANIAN POLICY) ARE DANGEROUS. THEY COULD RESULT IN
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DISASTER FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY...AS MANY AS 1,000
ELDERLY JEWS DEPEND ON ASSISTANCE FROM SUCH ORGANIZATIONS
AS THE JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE AND INVOLVING THEM
IN THE SPREADING OF SUCH INFORMATION IS IMMORAL."

3. ROSEN CLAIMED THERE IS NO DROP-OUT AMONG ROMANIAN
JEWS WHO ARE FLOWN DIRECTLY FROM BUCHAREST TO ISRAEL,

RATHER THAN THROUGH VIENNA, AND ADDED THAT "THERE IS A CHANCE TO SOLVE THIS (DROP-OUT) PROBLEM AS IT AFFECTS SOVIET ALIYA, EITHER BY ESTABLISHING DIRECT AIR CONTACT WITH MOSCOW OR BY MAKING BUCHAREST THE CONGREGATION SITE FOR OLIM FROM THE SOVIET UNION INSTEAD OF VIENNA."

4. COMMENT: ISRAELIS RECOGNIZE, AS WILL VETERAN ROSEN WATCHERS, THAT THE RABBI MUST SING THE SONG OF HIS MASTERS WHEN HE IS OUTSIDE ROMANIA. THE GOI ACCEPTS THIS, NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT IS MORE THAN SATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT STATUS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS CLEARLY CONCLUDED, AS DID ITS RECENT PREDECESSORS, THAT THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGES OF A PRESENCE IN BUCHAREST WHEN THE REST OF THE EAST IS OFF-LIMITS AND THE ASSET OF ROMANIA AS A GO-BETWEEN WITH THE ARABS REQUIRE THAT ISRAEL NOT ALLOW JEWISH EMIGRATION TO BECOME AN ISSUE OF BILATERAL CONTENTION. WE ARE DOUBTFUL THAT ANY CHANGE IN THIS POLICY WILL OCCUR SO LONG AS THE U.S. CONTINUES TO CARRY THE MAIN BURDEN OF PRESSURE ON THE GOR TO LIBERALIZE ITS EMIGRATION PROCEDURES.
LEWIS

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